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BATTLE ROYAL

48 PAGE SPECIAL!

SPAZ & PEPOY

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"BATTLE ROYAL!"
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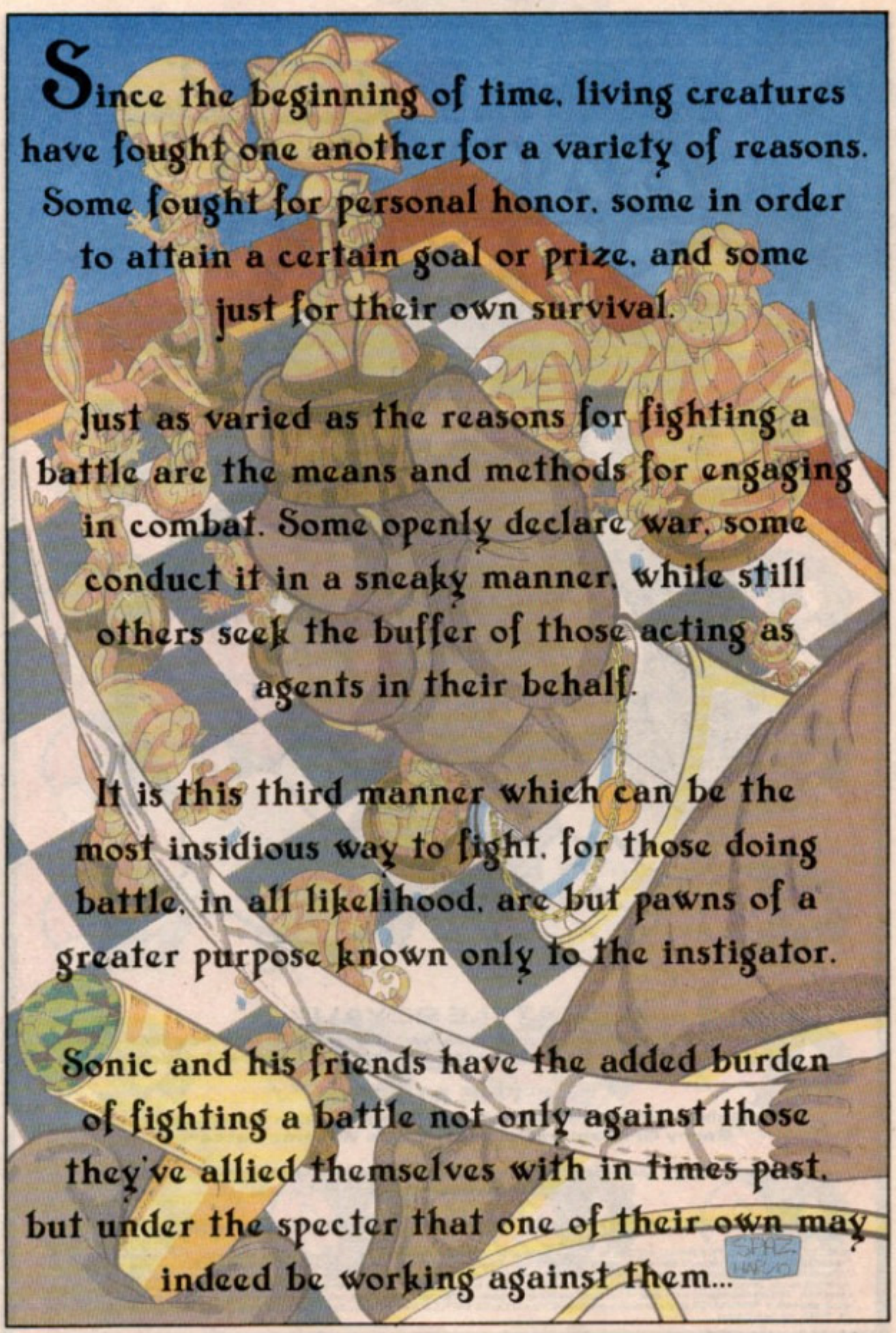
Since the beginning of time, living creatures have fought one another for a variety of reasons. Some fought for personal honor, some in order to attain a certain goal or prize, and some just for their own survival.
Just as varied as the reasons for fighting a battle are the means and methods for engaging in combat. Some openly declare war, some conduct it in a sneaky manner, while still others seek the buffer of those acting as agents in their behalf.
It is this third manner which can be the most insidious way to fight, for those doing battle, in all likelihood, are but pawns of a greater purpose known only to the instigator.
Sonic and his friends have the added burden of fighting a battle not only against those they've allied themselves with in times past, but under the specter that one of their own may indeed be working against them...

EVER AN AWESOME SIGHT TO BEHOLD, THE GRAND SPECTACLE THAT IS THE FLOATING ISLAND ALWAYS SPARKS AWE, EVEN IN MINDS HEAVY WITH DOUBTS OF FUTURE EXISTENCE...

STILL, TODAY'S JOURNEY, FILLED WITH PROMISE OF NEW PROSPERITY FOR THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS, IS NEVERTHELESS LADEN WITH ANXIETY AS IT WAS INITIATED BY A DISTRESS CALL...

Hmm... I WONDER... WEEL WE HAVE ZEE TRIUMPH OR ZEE DOOM WHEN WE ONCE AGAIN VISIT KNUCKLES' HOME?

C'MON, ANTOINE! IT CERTAINLY SOUNDED LIKE GOOD NEWS WHEN ROTOR ARRIVED AT OUR CAMPFIRE POW WOW* TO TELL US KNUX WAS SUCCESSFUL IN HIS QUEST!

* THE "POW WOW" AND RETRIEVAL OF KING ACORN'S SWORD HAPPENED IN SONIC# 46.--J-MOT

UNFORTUNATELY, KNUX'S RADIOED MESSAGE ALSO SAID THE ISLAND WAS UNDER SIEGE...

...AND AFTER ALL HE'S DONE FOR US, THE LEAST WE OWE HIM IS A LITTLE SUPPORT!

BUT AFTER A LONG AND SEEMINGLY FRUITLESS EXPEDITION...

HOW COME THERE'S NO SIGN OF KNUX OR A BATTLE?

BATTLE ROYAL

PART ONE

THAT'S CAUSE WE JUST FINISHED DEFEATING OUR ENEMIES...THANKS TO THE MYSTIC POWER OF THE KING'S SWORD!

IN FACT, IT WAS SO SWEET WE'VE GOT ORDERS FROM KNUX TO SEND YOU PACKIN' WITHOUT IT!

BUT...WHAT ABOUT KNUCKLES' SOLEMN VOW?

VOW, SHMOW! LOOKS LIKE WHAT I'VE ALWAYS SAID IS STILL TRUE--OL' POINTY HEAD CAN'T BE TRUSTED!

Dulcy The Dragon

Tails

Princess Sally Acorn

Sonic The Hedgehog

Rotor

Antoine D'Coolette

Bunnie Rabbot

HEY! I SAID "CAN'T BE TRUSTED", NOT " I WANNA GET BUSTED!"

WHOMP

TOO BAD! WE DON'T LIKE YOUR ATTITUDE!

BESIDES, THERE'S BEEN TOO MANY UNWANTED VISITORS TO THE FLOATING ISLAND... SO WE'RE KICKING YOU OFF!

KNUX DECIDED ONLY TO HANG WITH HIS HOMEBOYS! ANY-ONE ELSE GETS BEAT DOWN!

HEY! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA? I THOUGHT WE WERE ALL FRIENDS?!

C'MON, LET'S FIND KNUX AND TALK THIS OUT!

TOO LATE FOR THAT-- THESE GUYS GOT OUR DANDRUFF UP!

COOL DOWN, SONIC! TAKE THEM DOWN-- BUT WITH MINIMUM FORCE!

YOU WON'T TAKE US DOWN BEFORE WE TAKE YOU OUT!

OUTTA THE WAY, DULCY! LET ME AT 'IM!

YOU HEARD SALLY! WE'RE JUST TRYING TO STOP THEM!

GLOB

YEAH! YOU GUYS ARE GOING TO STICK AROUND WHILE WE SORT THIS OUT!

BAMF

NOT IF THE POWERS OF THE NEARBY ARCHIMEDES HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT! WE'LL BE BACK AND KNUCKLES WILL BE WITH US!

THAT'S SO UNLIKE KNUCKLES! WHATEVER IS HE THINKING?

ARE YOU KIDDING, SAL? THEY'RE ALL NUTS ON THIS ISLAND!

WHAT WE HAVE HEAH IS A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE!

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT HERE--

--AND WE'RE NOT LEAVING UNTIL WE FIND OUT WHAT--

--AND MOST CERTAINLY NOT WITHOUT THE SWORD!

LET'S GO EVERYONE!

BE READY FOR ANYTHING!

ELSEWHERE IN THE JUNGLE...

Mighty the Armadillo

Knuckles The Echidna

Charmy Bee

Vector the Crocodile

THE NERVE OF THOSE GUYS!

YEAH! AFTER WHAT YOU DID FOR THE PRINCESS, KNUX!*

I DON'T THINK SHE'S THE ONE SPOILING FOR A FIGHT!

SOMETHING MUST HAVE RILED THAT DOPEY HEDGEHOG!

Espio the Chameleon

*CHARMY IS REFERRING TO EVENTS TAKING PLACE DURING KNUCKLES' QUEST! (SEE LETTERS PAGE FOR ISSUES)--JFG

SMACK

GUYS! I THINK WE HAVE COMPANY!

OKAY, YOU MUGS! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA OF THREATENING US ON THE *RADIO* YOU WERE COMING HERE TO KICK OUR BUTTS?!

WE TOLD YOU-- YOU TOOK TOO LONG TO RETURN THE KING'S *SWORD*, AND NOW YOU'RE GONNA PAY!

HEY! IT'S NOT LIKE WE WERE GOING TO KEEP IT!

IF THAT'S SO, WHY HAVE YOU KEPT POSSESSION OF IT FOR OVER A *MONTH*!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? KNUCKLES ONLY JUST FOUND IT!

I WAS GOING TO HAND DELIVER IT ANY DAY!

YEAH, RIGHT!

LISTEN, I'M PUTTING A STOP TO THIS--RIGHT NOW!

NOW GIVE UP BEFORE WE REALLY CLOBBER YOU!

YOU LOSERS! THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS DON'T GIVE UP THAT EASILY!

AND WE'LL PROVE IT WHEN WE COME BACK WITH REINFORCEMENTS TO TAKE BACK THE SWORD AND TAKE YOU OUT!

YOU THINK THAT CONVINCED THEM?

MORE THAN DID THE TRICK!

I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE REAL FUN TO START!

Heh Heh-- YEAAH!

CONFUSED DEAR READER? SURPRISINGLY, SO ARE KNUCKLES AND COMPANY...

I DON'T GET IT, KNUX!

THEY THREATEN US AND BARELY PUT UP A FIGHT!

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO ME EITHER--

ARCHIMEDES!

BAMF

I HATE WHEN YOU DO THAT!

I CAME TO WARN YOU, KNUCKLES!

THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM!

YOU BET THEY AREN'T!

AND WE'RE GONNA FIND OUT WHY--RIGHT HERE--RIGHT NOW!

END OF PART ONE.

BATTLE ROYAL
PART TWO

THIS IS IT, YOU FINKS!

I CAN SEE BOYS WILL BE BOYS!

THIS CALLS FOR SANER HEADS!

BAMF

YOU'VE LOST IT! YOU'VE TOTALLY LOST IT!

EITHER THAT-- OR YOU'VE ONE BIG DEATH WISH!

IF THERE'S ONE THING I REALLY HATE--

--IT'S CHISELERS WHO GO BACK ON THEIR WORD!

YOU CAN'T KICK US FREEDOM FIGHTERS AROUND AND GET AWAY WITH IT!

YO, BOY! YOU BE THE ONE WHO DISSED US FIRST!

SONIC! WAIT!

OH, THIS IS HOPELESS!

THIS IS PATHETIC!

G'WAN BACK TO YOUR PLAYPEN, KID!

WHO ARE YOU CALLING "KID"?!

IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU BOYS, AH'D RATHAH MAKE LOVE, NOT WAR!

SEEMS TO ME YOU'VE A FUNNY WAY OF SHOWING IT!

HEY! NO FAIR!

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SEE YOU?

GET REAL!

WHAT IN LIFE IS FAIR THESE DAYS?

MY FRIENDS, THAT'S WHAT!

WHOA! THAT WAS CLOSE!

TSK-TSK!

YOU'VE REALLY GOT TO DO SOMETHIN' 'BOUT ALL THAT PENT-UP HOSTILITY, SUH-GAH!

TAILS AND BUNNIE MIGHT HAVE THEIR OWN SPECIAL ABILITIES--

K-TOOOSH

--BUT I'M NOT WITHOUT MY OWN!

HERE'S SMOKE IN YOUR EYE S, YOU CRAZY CROC!

YOU'VE SOME BRASS, SUCKA!

LET'S SEE YOUR SWERVE AFTER I'M DONE KICKIN' YOUR BUTTOCKS!

DON'T TELL ME THE BIG BAD DRAGON IS SCARED OF L'IL OL' ME!

DIDN'T YOUR MOTHER EVER TELL YOU IT'S NOT POLITE TO POINT?

EVASIVE MANEUVERS!

PULL UP! PULL UP!

DWLOY!

I CAN'T--

--LOOK!

BAM

WHAT THIS SITUATION NEEDS IS CALM, COOL THINKING, PRINCESS--

-- WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?

WHAK WHAK WHAK

EASIER SAID THAN DONE WITH THOSE TWO!

POW
HAD ENOUGH, DREAD-LILOCKS?
YOU CAN SURE DISH IT OUT, YOU SPIKE-HAIRED RODENT--
--BUT CAN YOU TAKE MY GUTBUSTER?!
WHAM
BIFF
WHUUMP
WOOOF!
OOOW!
ENOUGH FUN AND GAMES, BOYS!
Pant Wheeze
WE NEED TO POW-WOW!
ALL RIGHT, MY FRIEND, YOU'RE GOING TO EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON HERE--
--OTHERWISE THIS COULD GET UGLY!
WHAT TH--?
WHAT DOES THE PRINCESS THINK SHE'S DOING?
13

ACTING LIKE THE BOLD *FIELD COMMANDER* SHE IS, MOST LIKELY, SUGAH!

NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME--

--I THINK IT'S TIME WE CUT TO THE *CHASE!*

YOU REALLY THINK *YOU* CAN KEEP UP WITH *ME?!*

ALLOW THE DRAGON TO KEEP UP WITH YOU, CHARMY!

WHA--? ARCHIMEDES! BUT HOW?

NEVER MIND THAT! JUST LURE THE DRAGON TOWARDS THE PRINCESS AND I!

I HOPE THIS WORKS!

IF EVERYONE DOES AS THEY'RE TOLD, IT SHOULD!

GET READY--

NOW!

FWA-VOOSH

FWATOOMTOOM

BA-DHUUUM

AT LAST--

VICTORY IS MINE!

SAVOR THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS, MY MENACING MINIONS!

BEFORE LONG, THE WORLD SHALL BE OURS!

DON'T YOU THINK WE'RE GETTING A LITTLE AHEAD OF OURSELVES?

INSOLENT WRETCH!

YOU DARE DOUBT MY POWER?!

Mammoth Mogul

Sgt. Simian

Lightning Lynx

Flying Frog

Predator Hawk

FRA-ZZAAT!

PERHAPS A LITTLE *REMINDER* IS *NEEDED!*

I MAY *NOT* BE AT THE *PEAK* OF MY *ABILITIES*, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T *HANDLE* THE LIKES OF *YOU!*

I HAVE BEEN *PLANNING* AND *SCHEMING* SINCE BEFORE YOU WERE *BORN*--

SINCE YOUR *LAST* ENCOUNTER WITH THE *CHAOTIX*," IT WAS APPARENT BRUTE STRENGTH ALONE *WOULDN'T* WORK--

--SO I LET THEM *THINK* THEY GAINED AN EASY VICTORY, NOT KNOWING *OUR TRUE* MISSION WAS SIMPLY TO ASSESS THEIR SKILLS AND POWERS. WITH THAT ACCOMPLISHED, I BIDED MY TIME UNTIL I COULD PROPERLY *EXPLOIT* WHAT I HAD LEARNED.

"MECHA-MADNESS SPECIAL #1--- Historian Justin

"--AND WHEN *OPPORTUNITY* PRESENTED ITSELF WITH THE *SWORD OF ACORN*, I KNEW AT LAST ALL MY PLANNING HAD COME TO IT'S *FRUITION!*"

"AS SHOWN IN SONIC #46"-- Justin

"AS I WATCHED THE *ECHIDNA* CONTACT THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS, I REALIZED WHAT *PROBLEMS* LAY AHEAD IN ACCOMPLISHING MY OBJECTIVE.

"ALONE THEY'D BE NO MATCH, BUT *TOGETHER*--

--THEY COULD *POSSIBLY* THWART MY PLANS!"

"THAT'S WHY I SEIZED THE MOMENT MAKING USE OF MY VAST PSIONIC ABILITIES TO ALTER THE REALITIES OF MY UNWITTING PAWNS...

I CONTROL THE HORIZONTAL-- I CONTROL THE VERTICAL--

"WHAT NEITHER THE WALRUS OR ECHIDNA REALIZED WAS THAT THEY WERE WATCHING IMAGES GENERATED THROUGH MY THOUGHTWAVES...

--AND THE ISLAND'S UNDER SIEGE AGAIN, SO FOR NOW,..WE'RE KEEPING THE SWORD!

HOLD FAST! WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO HELP!

...AND YOU'VE TAKEN TOO LONG TO RETURN THE SWORD--WE'RE COMING FOR IT AND YOU!

WHAT ARE YOU JABBERING ABOUT?

"THERE WAS STILL DANGER THAT COOLER HEADS WOULD PREVAIL, SO I CREATED THE ILLUSION OF THE FEARSOME FOURSOME AS MEMBERS OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND THE CHAOTIX, IN ORDER TO FAN THE FLAMES OF MISTRUST BETWEEN THE OPPOSING SIDES...

--ALLOWING US TO WATCH FROM THE SIDELINES WHILE THEY BATTLED AMONGST THEMSELVES!

YEP! THAT WAS QUITE THE PLAN, MAN!

THAT VOICE--!

"HAVING BAITED THE HEDGEHOG AND FRIENDS, WE THEN MADE THE CHAOTIX BELIEVE THE WORST CONCERNING THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS--

YOU ALL SURVIVED!

BUT HOW?

WE HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO SQUARE WITH YOU FIRST, BUB!

IS THAT SO?

I THINK MY ELITE GUARD MIGHT THINK OTHERWISE!

HAVE AT THEM!

ISN'T THIS SOMEWHAT UNFAIR? TWO AGAINST ONE?

HEY! THEY STARTED IT--

--AND WE'RE FINISHING IT!

ZOK

POW

BAM

SO MUCH FOR THEM LOSERS!

YEAH, SNOT-NOSE, TIME TO PAY THE PIPER!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND! I SAW THE LOT OF YOU VAPORIZED!

HOW COULD YOU--?

"YOU SAID IT YOURSELF -- 'COOLER HEADS MIGHT PREVAIL'! ARCHIMEDES AND I KNEW SOMETHING STUNK HERE...

...AND BELIEVING THE *REAL* ENEMY TO BE WATCHING, WE PUT ON A LITTLE PERFORMANCE TO COVER OUR PLAN!"

"USING POWERS YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW ARCHIMEDES HAS", HE COVERTLY CONTACTED CHARMY TO BEGIN *PHASE ONE*..."

"TELEPATHY MAYBE?" -- J. "NOT MINDING my own business" Gabrie

"WHO IN TURN TOLD ME TO BEGIN *PHASE TWO*. ARCHIMEDES AND I PULLED A FAST ONE THAT CREATED A *DIVERSION*...

AND WHILE THE KEWL FLAMES MADE US LOOK LIKE WE WERE TAKIN' THE HEAT, ARCHY *TELE-PORTED* US TO SAFETY...

...WHICH GAVE US TIME TO FIGURE OUT BOTH OUR GANGS WERE TAKING THE RAP FOR YOUR HOMIES!

AND HOW IS IT YOU CAME UPON THAT *BRIEF* FLASH OF BRILLIANCE?

"CAUSE YOU DIDN'T DO YOUR HOMEWORK! MIGHTY SAID THAT THE POWERS OF THE *NEARBY* ARCHIMEDES HELPED HIM TO ESCAPE"...

"...BUT THE CHAOTIX KNOW THAT ARCHY HAS TO *TOUCH YOU* TO DO HIS VANISHING ROUTINE!"

"AND YOU MAY HAVE DISGUISED YOUR SOLDIERS BUT YOU DIDN'T DISGUISE THEIR *POWERS*..."

"EVERYONE KNOWS AH ONLY HAVE SUPER STRENGTH IN MUH LEFT ARM!*"

*CHECK OUT PAGE 4, PANEL 5 & KNUX'S MINI-SERIES #3!

*CHECK OUT PAGE 6, PANEL 3.

"AND WHILE YOUR GUY WAS QUICK, HE WAS NOWHERE NEAR THE *SPEED* OF THE BLUE DOOFBALL!*"

AND HOW COME ONLY *FOUR* OF SIX CHAOTIX ATTACKED US?!

AND HOW COME *SEVEN* F.F.'S LANDED BUT ONLY *FOUR* ATTACKED US?!

*PAGE 6, PANEL 6

ALSO, NO WAY MIGHT WOULD HAVE ATTACKED ME WITHOUT TALKING FIRST --OR AT *LEAST* SAYING "HI"!

Y'SEE TALL, DARK AND HAIRY, WE'RE OLD PALS!*

ZO, BIG JUMBO, YOU ARE NOT ONLY ZEE BIG PERSON, BUT ALSO ZEE BIG *FOOL*!

NOW THAT YOUR SCHEME IS KAPUT, HAND OVER ZEE *SWORD* AND YOU WON'T BE HURT!

*WHEN & WHERE DID THIS HAPPEN? CHECK OUT FUTURE ISSUES OF SONIC FOR THE STORY.

ARRGHH!

NO LOWER LIFE FORMS OUT THINK ME--AND LIVE!

HEY, FRENCH FRY, NEXT TIME KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT! UGH!

C'MON! EVERYONE DOG PILE ON FATSO!

BASH

CHOK

POW

NO GO! HE'S TOO POWERFUL!

I THOUGHT HE WASN'T AT THE PEAK OF HIS POWERS!

IT'S GOTTA BE THE *SWORD*--I'VE SEEN HOW IT *INCREASES* SOMEONE'S POWERS!*

THIS BATTLE WILL BE YOUR LAST, *PARASITES!*

NOT IF THIS *CHAOS EMERALD* HAS ANYTHING TO DO ABOUT IT!

NO! IT'S ATTRACTING MY OWN EMERALD, CAUSING IT TO...

*CHECK OUT MATHIAS POE IN SONIC #46. -JEG

KABOOM!

WOW! BRING TWO CHAOS EMERALDS TOGETHER...

AND THAT'S WHAT YOU GET... UTTER CHAOS!

PRETTY SMART-- TAKING A CHANCE ONE CHAOS EMERALD MIGHT BLOW UP ANOTHER!

IT WAS A DESPERATE GAMBLE AT BEST!

ALRIGHT! HE BLEW HIM OUT OF THE UNIVERSE!

DON'T SWEAT IT, SHORTY, IT PAID OFF!

AND IT DID LEAVE US WITH THE SWORD SO...

AS PER MY SOLEMN VOW, I HUMBLY MAKE GOOD MY PROMISE!

AND FOR YOUR COURAGE AND FORTITUDE ON BEHALF OF THE REALM...

I HEARBY DULY KNIGHT YOU! YOU ARE THIS ISLAND'S GUARDIAN, BUT WHEN IN KNOTHOLE, YOU ARE NOW AND FOREVERMORE... SIR KNUCKLES!

HIP HIP HOORAY!

ALAS, DURING TIMES OF WAR, SMALL VICTORIES CAN ONLY SIRE SMALL CELEBRATIONS, GIVING WAY TO DIRE ISSUES AT HAND...

EAGER TO COMPLETE THEIR FINAL GOAL, THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS RACE HOME TO SAVE THEIR KING...

...NEVER SUSPECTING THAT WHICH AWAITS THEM IN THEIR SECRET SANCTUARY!

ROTOR, CONTACT UNCLE CHUCK! WITH HIS HELP, I'M SURE WE CAN FINALLY RETRIEVE THE CROWN OF ACORNS! I'LL BEGIN MY RESEARCH IN MY HUT WITH NICOLE.

PRINCESS SALLY...!

COME QUICK, CHILD!

DADDY!

REALLY, MY DEAR SALLY, WHAT'S BECOME OF YOUR REGAL BEARING?

* SEE SONIC #47 FOR THE LOW-DOWN.

EPILOGUE:

AND WHILE A RAY OF HOPE SEEMS TO EMIT FROM THAT FORMER REALM, IT MAY JUST BE CLOUDED BY THE SWIRLING MISTS OF AN UNKNOWN MYSTERIOUS REALM...

WHAT FOOLS THESE MORTALS BE... TO THINK THEY COULD OUT-WIT ME...

IF ONLY THEY KNEW I'VE MANIPULATED *EVERY* EVENT... FROM MY SEEMING INEPTITUDE, TO MY "*ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION*..."

...AND BY THE TIME THEY ASCERTAIN I HAVE THE *REAL* SWORD OF ACORNS, IT WILL BE TOO LATE!

MY *MASTER PLAN* WILL BE WELL NEAR COMPLETION, LEAVING THE ENTIRE PLANET MOBIUS GROVELING AT MY FEET!

KING ACORN RESTORED TO HEALTH?! LOOKS LIKE IT'S COUNTDOWN TO ROBOTNIK'S DESTRUCTION, OR IS IT? THE ANSWER IS *ENDGAME* IN SONIC #50, SEE LETTERS PAGE FOR DETAILS, AND WHAT OF MAMMOTH MOGUL? KEEP READING SONIC & KNUCKLES TO FIND OUT!!

BATTLE ROYAL mail

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J. Freddy Gabrie
Editor

In four weeks, get set for the premiere of **KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA #4 the ongoing series,** starting a new chapter in the life of everyone's **favorite Guardian of the Floating Island.** In a three-part epic, **"LOST PARADISE"** reunites Knuckles with the one person he never, ever expected to see. But an even bigger problem occurs when the fabled city of **Echidnaopolis reappears**, posing a threat to the Floating Island's eco-system. Don't miss the echidna excitement with regulars Ken Penders, Manny Galan and Andrew Pepoy. In the tradition of the first three issues, every three-part story-arc will sport **triple-combo covers** by fan-fave Pat 'Spaz'iante along with inks by Ken Penders and colors by those maniacs at Heroic Age! Also look for a contest announcement in his letters page to commemorate his new ongoing series.

In other Mobius news, in one week **"End Game"** continues. The stakes between **Robotnik** and the Freedom Fighters reaches a fever-pitch. The now-healthy **King Acorn** loses his daughter in an attack on **Robotropolis**, and Sonic is arrested as the culprit responsible. Sonic escapes to clear his name. The King orders none other than **Geoffrey St. John** to track him down. That's when things get nasty. Read **"Escape to the Floating Island!"** in **SONIC THE HEDGEHOG #49, on sale May 1997!** Whatever you do, don't miss this one!

Look out for the next Sonic Special coming your way in four months time... SONIC SPECIAL '97: A BRAVE NEW WORLD #1! 'Nuff said!

P.S.: Attention! Attention! Mike Wallis' name was spelled incorrectly in the "SONIC BLAST" Special #1 credits page. Sorry, Mike.

THE PLIGHT OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS IS A NEVER-ENDING ONE. EACH TRIES FINDING A WAY TO STOP ROBOTNIK'S TERRORIZING OF THE FOREST EVERY SINGLE DAY. TODAY IS NO EXCEPTION.

FROM THE ANTOINE FILES:

THE MAP

POWER RING GRID

PART ONE

MY FATHER LEFT ZO MUCH BEHIND. I WISH HE WERE HERE TO HELP.

I WANT TO MAKE HIM PROUD. IF HE COULD ONLY ZEE.

RECON MAPS

WE WERE ZO YOUNG ZEN.

IT IZ AMAZING THAT WE HAVE LASTED ZO LONG AGAINST ROBOTNIK.

PERHAPS THIZ IZ A WAY TO FINALLY DEFEAT HIM.

BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

WHAT IZ DIS MAP ZUPPOSED TO LEAD TO...?

I WAS WONDERING WHAT YOU WERE DOING IN HERE ON SUCH A NICE DAY?

I AM DOING NOTING DAT CONCERNS YOU. NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND, I WISH TO BE ALONE.

MOBIUS TERRAIN

I CAN TELL WHEN I'M NOT WANTED. JUST WAIT TILL I GET SOME STUFF TO WORK ON...

ZANK YOU FOR BEING SO OBSERVANT. NOW, IF YOU PLEASE...

WHAT WAS SO SPECIAL ABOUT DIS MAP DAT FATHER HAD TO HIDE IT IN ZE HILT OF HIS SWORD?

... WELL, NOW IT'S MY SWORD!

BUDDING CIRCLE

ZE COMPLETE SIDE MUST MARK ZE LOCATION OF ZE SECOND HALF OF ZE MAP.

I WILL APOLOGIZE TO BUNNIE LATER. BUT, FOR NOW, I MUST FIGURE ZE SECRET OF SIS MAP.

BUT ZE MAP WAS WRITTEN SO LONG AGO, MOST OF ZE LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED, THANKS TO ROBOTNIK'S MACHINATIONS.

ROBOTROPOLIS

I MUST DISCOVER WHAT SIS MAP MEANS.

ROBOTROPOLIS, A PLACE WHERE EVIL IS GOOD AND EVERYONE IS PROGRAMMED.

I MUST FIND SOMETHING THAT WILL GET RID OF "UNCLE JULIAN" ONCE AND FOR ALL, AND ALLOW ME THE CHANCE TO CLAIM POWER.

I HAVE BEEN SUBTLY SCHEMING AGAINST HIM FOR YEARS, BUT IF I'M NOT TOO CAREFUL, HE'LL KNOW IT'S *ME*.

FRAGILE

ROBOTNIK MUST HAVE COME CLOSE TO FINDING OUT AT LEAST ONCE. HE'S FAT, BUT NOT ENTIRELY *STUPID*.

Hmmm... WHAT'S THIS? A STRANGE-LOOKING MAP. I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THE *BUDDING CIRCLE*.

MAYBE THE COMPUTER HAS SOMETHING ON IT...

LOCATE:

BUDDING CIRCLE

THANK YOU ONCE MORE, MY LITTLE PROGRAMMED PAL.

I SEE WHY THIS MAP WAS ABANDONED... NOTHING IS SAFE WHERE THE KRUDZU ARE CONCERNED!

LOCATED IN...

... ROBOTROPOLIS

BACK IN KNOTHOLE.

BOTH MAPS HAVE ONE COMPLETE ZIDE, THE X ON THE COMPLETE ZIDE IZ AT A PLACE CALLED BUDDING CIRCLE.

BUDDING CIRCLE WAS A ZECTION IN MOBOTROPOLIS. ROBOTNIK DESTROYED IT WIT HIZ WRETCHED KRUDZU, ORGANIC, METALLIC PLANTS THAT GROW FROM ZEEDS.*

ZE GROUND AT BUDDING CIRCLE COULD NOT TAKE THE STRAIN AND COLLAPSED THEM DOWN INTO ZE EARTH.

* REDISCOVERED BY THE 'BOTS WAY BACK IN SONIC #1 -- A PRED-A-PLANT NEVER FORGETS!

** AGAIN, SONIC #1 -- J.F.G.

AFTER DAT, ROBOTNIK TRIED USING DEM IN ZE GREAT FOREST, UNTIL WE DIZCOVERED THEIR ONLY WEAKNESS -- WATER!** ZEN ZE KRUDZU WERE NEVER SEEN AGAIN.

MAYBE DE FAT MAN IZ HIDING DOZ HORRID PLANTS DARE? OR DE MAP TO FIND WHERE HE PUT DE REST OF DE ZEEDS? OR MAYBE DE MAP LEADZ TO DE MOST POWERFUL OF POWER RINGS?

NONE DE LESS, I HAVE COORDI-NATES DAT WILL PUT ME NEAR ONE MILE OF WHERE BUDDING CIRCLE UZED TO BE. I'M SURE DE OLD WELL IZ NOT DARE, BUT I MUST TRY.

WHAT PROBLEMS COULD I HAVE? ZE ZOUTH ZIDE OF ROBOTROPOLIS IZ A STINKY ZEWER. NO ONE IN DARE RIGHT MIND WOULD GO DARE.

TUNNEL 3B LEADS ZTRAIGHT TO ZAT PART OF ZE CITEE.

TOP SECRET

I MUST TELL ZOMEONE. NO, I CAN NOT. TO TELL PRINCEZZ ZALLY OR ANYONE ELZE, WOULD MEAN GIVING AN INCOMPLETE REPORT, AND AZ MY FATHER TOLD ME ONCE, "A REPORT IZ WORT NOTING IF EET IZ INCOMPLETE."

BUDDING CIRCLE

ROBOTROPOLIS

ROBOTROPOLIS TUNNEL SYSTEMS

I SHALL DO DIS ON MY OWN.

THE SOUTH SIDE OF ROBOTROPOLIS.

I HATE THE SOUTH SIDE OF ROBOTROPOLIS. IT SMELLS LIKE DEAD FISH.

MOVE IT ALONG, YOU *IDIOTS!* AND BE CAREFUL. IF ROBOTNIK PICKS US UP ON ANY SEISMOGRAPHS, IT'S BACK TO THE *SCRAP PILE* WITH YA!

IF HE ONLY KNEW I CREATED THESE EGGROBOS TO BE PART OF MY OWN PRIVATE ARMY... I SHUDDER TO EVEN THINK IT.

OH, BUT HOW JOYOUS IT WOULD BE TO FIND SOME KRUDZU SEEDLINGS AND SEND IT IVO'S WAY, EATING EVERYTHING HE'S BUILT DOWN TO THE BONE.

THIS WAY-- I AND I ALONE-- WILL RULE.

HURRY IT UP! I WANT...

PTUNK!

...THAT SECOND HALF OF THE MAP FOUND. DO YOU HEAR ME, YOU IDIOTS?!

BZZZIT, YES, MISTER SNIVELY. BZZZIT.

ZAT BIG NOSE, LITTLE NO GOOD MAP STEALA. HE HAZ ZE ZECOND HALF OF ZE MAP.

MOVE FASTER, YOU MECHANICAL IDIOTS. I NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S DOWN THERE NOW. IT DOES ME NO GOOD IF I'M CAUGHT. AND THIS MAP JUST MIGHT LEAD TO THE KRUDZU, AND THEY ARE JUST THE THING I NEED. SO MOVE IT!

ZE KRUDZU! IZ DAT WHAT DIZ MAP LEADS TO? DARE IZ NO TELLING WHAT THEY WOULD DO IF SNIVELY CONTROLLED DEM.

DIS CAN'T BE A MAP TO THE KRUDZU. WHAT WOULD MY FATHER BE DOING WIT A MAP TO DOSE TINGS.

I HAVE TO TELL ZE OTHERS.

I HOPE THE NOISE LEVEL WILL KEEP ME UNNOTICED. I HAVE TO WARN ZE FREEDOM FIGHTERS.

MOVE IT. MOVE IT. MOVE IT!

KLINK!

WHOA!

CLANG!

?

YOU THREE, GO CHECK THAT OUT. I CAN'T RISK FATSO FINDING OUT WHAT I'M UP TO.

BZZZIT, YES SIR, MISTER SNIVELY. BZZZIT.

BZZZIT. SEARCH.

DESTROY. BZZZIT.

ZIS IZ DE END FOR ME.

WILL ANTOINE MAKE IT BACK TO KNOTHOLE TO WARN HIS FRIENDS, OR HAS TIME RUN OUT FOR THE FREEDOM FIGHTER ?

END OF PART ONE

BZZIT. WE HAVE A LOCK ON TARGET. BZZIT.

I AM NOT GOING TO MAKE IT. IT'Z BEEN A GOOD LIFE.

PIZZOU PIZZOU

PSH PSH

THE MAP

PART TWO

PSH

OOOF! ZAT WAZ TOO CLOSE FOR ME--

--BUT ZE ZEWERS OF ROBOTROPOLIS ARE NO BETTER. WHAT AM I GOING TO... WAIT A MINUTE.

WHERE DID I PUT ZAT LOCATOR? COME ON, COME ON.

PIZZOU PIZZOU

WHY DID I HAVE TO WEAR A PAIR OF PANTZ WIT ZO MANY POCKETS?

PERHAPS UNCLE CHUCK SHOULD HAVE MADE THIS TING SLIME PROOF, NO?

I MUST REMIND MYSELF TO ZANK UNCLE CHUCK FOR ZIS LOCATOR DEVICE. IF I CAN ONLY GET IT TO WORK.

BZZIT. WE HAVE A LOCK ON TARGET. BZZIT.

CRASH

ZONIC WOULD ZAY · ZOMETHING SNAPPY RIGHT NOW, BUT I CAN NO TINK OF ANYTING.

BZZIT. TARGET LOCATED. MITIATE SEARCH. BZZIT.

DO ZEES GUYZ EVA GIVE UP?

I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE. MUST... WARN... OTHERS...

LET'S ZEE IF A POWER RING WILL WORK FOR ME LIKE EET DOES FOR ZONIC.

BZZIT. WE MUST DESTROY YOU. BZZIT.

ZEY SAY IT ENHANCES YOUR NATURAL ABILITIES IF YOU'RE PURE OF HEART. PLEAZE. IF YOU NEVA WORK AGAIN, I'LL BE HAPPY. BUT RIGHT NOW...

YES!

SQUAWK!

SLICE!

ZAT SHOULD HOLD DEM FOR A MOMENT WHILE I CHECK ZE LOCATOR.

ALL I NEED IZ A FEW ZECONDZ...

BLAM

I HAVE ZIZ FEELING THAT ZE EGGBOTS CAN NO TELL TIME.

BZZIT. DESTROY. BZZIT.

CRASH

ZAY ARE TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT. THANK GOODNESS ZAY ARE LOUZY SHOTZ.

PIZZOU

PIZZOU

BZZIT. DESTROY. BZZIT.

ZIZ MAY BE JUST DE THING I NEED

IF I TIME THIS JUST RIGHT, IT'LL BE LONG GONE BEFORE THEY REALIZE WHAT HAZ HAPPENED

BZZIT?

BZZIT?

SOON, AT UNCLE CHUCK'S SECRET SPY BASE...

'NCLE CHUCK! SNIVELY HAZ THE UDER HALF OF DIS MAP AND AN ARMY OF NEW EGGBOTS! ZEY HAVE VERY BIG GUNS!

SLOW DOWN. SLOW DOWN, MY BOY.

AFTER MORE OF ANTOINE'S BABBLING...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? EVERYONE'S BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU. THEY ASKED ME TO CHECK MY RESOURCES--MAKE SURE YOU WEREN'T CAPTURED BY DR. R!

I SAID, I'VE BEEN IN ZE SOUTH SIDE OF ROBOTROPOLIS INVESTIGATING DIS MAP AND...

DID I MENTION DAT DEY HAD SOME VERY BIG GUNS?

OH MY, ROTOR WAS TRACKING STRANGE SEISMIC ACTIVITY IN THAT AREA YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. HE TOOK SONIC AND BUNNIE TO CHECK IT OUT.

ZAT IS NOT GOOD.

NO, IT ISN'T. WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING.

I MUST DO ZIS ALONE. IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME NO TELLING ANYONE WHAT I WAS UP TO, ZIS WOULD NOT HAVE 'APPENED.

I JUST HOPE I MAKE IT BACK IN TIME. HOLD ON TO ZE MAP.

BUT I JUST CAN'T LET YOU...

SORRY--BUT I MUST!

}SIGH...{ GOOD LUCK!

OH, NO!

HANG ON ROTOR, BE THERE IN A JIFF! BUNNIE, I COULD USE SOME COVER FIRE.

YOU GOT IT, SLIGA'!

ANTOINE!

--CATCH!

THANKS FOR SHOWING UP ANTOINE, AND THANKS FOR THE RING!

THESE GUYS JUST CAN'T TAKE A HINT!

I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD.

DON'T WORRY, PAL.

BUNNIE--WE'VE GOT INBOUND SWATBOTS AT THREE O'CLOCK.

THOSE SWATBOTS ARE NOT GOING TO TAKE IT EASY ON US AND I'M RUNNING LOW ON POWER.

WHY ARE THEY HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE? YOU DIDN'T CALL THESE GUYS, DID YOU ANTOINE?

THINGS HAVE GONE FROM *BAD* TO *WORSE*!

NO. I CAME HERE TO ZAVE UZ, NOT INSURE DAT WE *DIE*!

I'M GETTING *TIRED* OF THIS!

WE HAVE TO KEEP FIGHTING. THE EGGBOTS ARE...

...GONE?

ZIS IS OUR CHANCE.

WELL THEN, LET'S TAKE IT.

TEN-FOUR ON THAT ONE.

FOLLOW ME. I KNOW DE WAY.

OKAY, YOU LEAD.

WHY AREN'T THE SWATBOTS FOLLOWING US DOWN HERE? IT'S LIKE THEY DIDN'T COME HERE FOR US.

YOU CAN WRITE THEM A LETTER AND TELL THEM HOW YOU FEEL LATER. BUT RIGHT NOW, WE GOTTA GO.

SNIVELY! WHAT'S THIS I HEAR OF *ATTACK ROBOTS* MORE POWERFUL THAN *MINE*?!

WHAT *ATTACK ROBOTS*? OH, YOU MEAN MY *DIGGING* ROBOTS.

I GOT THIS ANONYMOUS CALL TELLING ME YOU HAD SOME NEW, SUPER-POWERED 'BOTS, YOU DESTROYED THE 'BOTS, DIDN'T YOU?

WELL SIR, THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED: I WAS TESTING AN EXPERIMENTAL *TOXIN* USED TO LEVEL ANY GROUND STRUCTURE, NAMELY TREES AND THINGS FOUND IN THE FOREST... WHEN THESE ACCURSED FREEDOM FIGHTERS ATTACKED. I'M AFRAID ALL MY RESEARCH WAS DESTROYED, AS WELL AS THE "DIGGING" ROBOTS, SIR.

THEY SHALL PAY A HEAVY PRICE FOR THEIR ARROGANCE, SNIVELY! THIS, I COMMAND!

BACK IN KNOTHOLE...

IT'Z A GOOD THING UNCLE CHUCK MADE THAT CALL TO ROBOTNIK WHEN HE DID. A SHAME I NEVER FIND OUT WHAT'S AT ZE UDER END OF ZE MAP.

MAYBE ZOMEDAY.

THE END